

# Michigan Wetland Inventory

*Final Report*

April 20, 2007

## Introduction

This report was written to satisfy the final report requirement of the grant agreement between the Department of Environmental Quality's (DEQ's) Office of the Great Lakes (OGL) and the Land and Water Management Division (LWMD) for the Michigan Wetland Inventory.

In counties with a population of less than 100,000, Part 303, Wetlands Protection, of the Natural Resources and Environmental Protection Act, 1994 PA 451, as amended, provides for the regulation of non-contiguous wetlands greater than five acres only after a wetland inventory is complete. Part 303 includes specific requirements for the development of wetland inventories by the DEQ. After a preliminary inventory map for a county is prepared, the DEQ must file it with the county clerk, register of deeds, and agricultural extension office. Legislators must also be sent copies of the preliminary inventories in their district. Part 303 requires the DEQ to provide public notice and hold at least two public hearings in each planning region. The inventory can then be finalized and must be filed with the county clerk, register of deeds, agricultural extension office, and appropriate legislators. As wetland inventories are completed, Part 303 requires that property owners in the county be notified on their tax bill that a wetland inventory has been completed.

Section 303 of Enrolled House Bill Number 5276 of 2000 required the LWMD to submit a request to the Michigan Great Lakes Protection Fund (GLPF) in 2001 for the development of a wetland inventory in the state on a county-by-county basis. This allowed the LWMD a funding source for the wetland inventories, which had not received general funding since they were required by Part 303 when it was passed in 1979. The LWMD was awarded funding for the inventories from the GLPF by OGL starting in 2002.

As part of the U.S. Environmental Protection Agency's (USEPA's) review of the DEQ's administration of Section 404 of the federal Clean Water Act, the LWMD committed to completing the wetland inventories within five years. The LWMD developed the following five-year plan to complete the inventories on a regional basis based on this deadline and where digital soil data was available in the state:

Year 1: Hillsdale, Lenawee, Jackson, Eaton, Ingham, Clinton, Monroe, Washtenaw, Wayne, Livingston, Oakland, Macomb, and Saint Clair Counties.

Year 2: Berrien, Cass, Van Buren, Barry, Kalamazoo, Calhoun, Saint Joseph, Branch, Mason, Lake, Oceana, Newaygo, and Muskegon Counties.

Year 3: Shiawassee, Genesee, Lapeer, Roscommon, Ogemaw, Iosco, Clare, Gladwin, Arenac, Isabella, Midland, Bay, Gratiot, Saginaw, Tuscola, Sanilac, and Huron Counties.

Year 4: Cheboygan, Presque Isle, Otsego, Montmorency, Alpena, Crawford, Oscoda, Alcona, Osceola, Mecosta, Montcalm, Ionia, Kent, Ottawa, Allegan, Luce, Chippewa, and Mackinac Counties.

Year 5: Emmet, Charlevoix, Antrim, Leelanau, Benzie, Grand Traverse, Kalkaska, Missaukee, Wexford, Manistee, Marquette, Alger, Schoolcraft, Delta, Dickinson, Menominee, Keweenaw, Houghton, Ontonagon, Baraga, Iron, and Gogebic.

## **Methods**

The wetland inventory maps were produced by overlaying, in a Geographic Information System (GIS), the National Wetland Inventory (NWI), Michigan Resource Information System (MIRIS) land cover, and the U.S. Department of Agriculture's Natural Resource Conservation Service soil data. The MIRIS and NWI data are shown as one data layer in dark green on the map. The MIRIS land cover types included in the data layer are lowland hardwoods, lowland conifer, forested wetland, shrub-scrub wetland, floating aquatic bed, emergent wetland, and flats. All NWI wetland types are included in the data layer. Hydric soils and hydric soil complexes are included in the soil layer in tan.

The wetland inventories will represent existing information that suggests the probability that a wetland may or may not exist in a given area. The inventories are not intended to be used to determine the specific locations and boundaries of wetland areas subject to regulation. The LWMD has a Wetland Identification Program to assist property owners with identifying the location of any wetlands on their property and determining if the wetlands are regulated.

In addition to satisfying statutory and program requirements, the LWMD expects that the wetland inventories will assist local governments and others in preserving, enhancing, and restoring wetlands through planning activities, such as open space designations, zoning, watershed management programs, and wetland restoration projects.

## **Year 5**

The following tasks were completed during 2006 to complete Year 5:

- Determined the soils to be shown in the hydric soil layer for each county included in Year 5.
- Created a preliminary wetland inventory map for each county for Year 5 by overlaying data sources in a GIS.
- Filed copies of the preliminary wetland inventory map for Year 5 with the county clerk, agricultural extension, and register of deeds offices, and appropriate legislators for each county.
- Scheduled six public hearings for Year 5. Published notifications in local newspapers and the DEQ Calendar. Held public hearings.

## **Final Inventory**

The LWMD has finalized the wetland inventory as of January 1, 2007. Now that the final inventory is complete, non-contiguous wetlands over five acres in size are regulated in all counties. To finalize the inventory, the following tasks have been completed:

- Copies of the final wetland inventory were filed with the county clerk, agricultural extension, and register of deeds offices, and appropriate legislators for each county.

- Guidance was provided to LWMD staff on the change in regulation of wetlands greater than 5 acres in counties with a population less than 100,000.
- The LWMD certified to the DEQ Director that the wetland inventory was complete as of January 1, 2007.
- The LWMD notified the U.S. EPA that the wetland inventory was complete.
- A press release on the wetland inventory was sent out as well as requests to publish notice in statewide organization newsletters including the Michigan Municipal League, the Michigan Association of Counties, and the Michigan Township Association.
- A notification that the wetland inventory was complete was sent to wetland consultants and other wetland stakeholders in the state.
- A request to all county treasurer offices in the state was sent regarding notification on property owner taxbills.

Copies of the above correspondence are enclosed. The final wetland inventories are available on the LWMD website at <http://www.michigan.gov/deqwetlands>. Paper copies of the maps are also available from the LWMD at cost.